

**TOWN OF ARLINGTON
LEAF BLOWER COMMITTEE**

Leaf Blower Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 14, 2013
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mr. Greeley, Facilitator, Mrs. Mahon, Chair, Mr. Tibbetts, Vice Chair, Ms. Snyder, Secretary, Mr. Adleman, Ms. Band, Ms. Butts, Mr. Cusce, Mr. Downing, Mr. Grandon, Mr. Horan, Mr. Kerble, Ms. Romano, Mr. Ruderman, and Mrs. Sullivan.

I. Mr. Greeley opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. as the meeting facilitator and stated that the purpose of the public meeting was to receive comments from the meeting participants regarding gas-powered leaf blower usage in Town. Mr. Greeley stated that any Arlington resident or business interested in commenting on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, forward a brief comment by February 4, 2013 3:00 PM to:
msullivan@town.arlington.ma.us.

II. Mr. Greeley introduced the 2012 STM Leaf Blower Committee and explained the history of the leaf blower issue through Town Meeting, Special Election, Board of Selectmen Meeting decisions, Special Town Meeting, committees established, and now Public Meeting and back to Special Town Meeting in 2013. He stated that all comments from tonight's meeting and those emailed to the Selectmen's Office will be turned over to this committee for review so that they can make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and to the 2013 Special Town Meeting. Below list a summary of the comments:

1) Stephen Harrington/ 74 Columbia Rd/supports no ban:

- attended all meetings and feels any ban is not a good solution
- contacted the EPA and State DPH to research health hazards from leaf blowers, both of which did not commit to any public health hazard
- will cost him \$3,000. for leaf clean up by landscapers or by rake take him 4 to 6 week-ends to clean up
- does not want taken away from him the tools to keep up his land

2) Eileen Rosen/13 Academy St./supports current ban:

- asked the committee to be more careful with definitions/terms used so as not to confuse people
- explains that Town Meeting did not vote a ban but prohibits gas-powered leaf blower usage for five months-which is a compromise to a ban
- would like bigger restrictions because of sound and pollution, but is happy to hear machines are being updated and getting better

3) Eric Burger/18 Hamilton St.,Spy Pond Condos/ supports compromise:

- thanked the Selectmen for working on a compromise-it makes good sense and strongly supports a compromise
- if current ban remains that will drive up the cost for the condo and thus higher condo fees for all
- many condo owners are living on tight or fixed incomes and it would hurt them
- noise is a legitimate issue, but the noise bylaw should deal with this

4) Steven Delbanco/22 Oak Hill Dr./ supports current ban:

- there are not a lot of stats but hundreds of articles that are both good and bad re: blowers
- he goes by the "smell" test blower or rake and the rake is healthier

5) Henry Olds/71 Bartlett St./supports current ban:

- we are all going to have to suffer inconveniences if we want to change/help the world and feels sad if the Town/Country can't make changes for the better
- it takes more work to rake but maybe pay kids to do the raking

6) George Buckley/164 Renfrew St./ supports current ban or a compromise:

- full throttle usage is a clear and present hazard to residents-stirs up an assault on the respiratory system
- noise must be released-Cambridge does it low speed
- suggests a low throttle speed so that we can avoid a ban
- there was a handout: Leaf Blowers A Guide to Safer & More Courteous Use

7) Gordon Jamieson/163 Scituate St./supports a compromise:

- the following are the suggestions on his hand-out:

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT/LEAF BLOWERS

D. Use of Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

1. ~~2. For purposes of this section only, the term, "leaf blowers" for commercial and~~

~~Town employees shall mean "gas powered leaf blowers."~~ The use of leaf blowers is prohibited between June 15th and September 15th except in accordance with the following restrictions, which shall not apply to the use of leaf blowers to perform emergency operations or for clean-up associated with storms, hurricanes and the like:

(a) The use of leaf blowers is prohibited on

~~(i) Sundays and legal holidays;~~

~~(ii) Mondays through Fridays except between the hours of 8:00 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 5:30 p.m.; and~~

~~(iii) Saturdays except between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.~~

(b) No more than one leaf blower may be used on any piece of property ('lot') of 6,000 square feet or smaller. One additional leaf blower may be used for each additional 6,000 square feet or portion thereof comprising one piece of property ('lot').

(c) Leaf blowers may not be used for no more than 30 minutes on any lot as defined in section 1 (b) during a six hour time interval. ~~at a total time:~~

2. ~~3.~~ At no time shall any leaf blower be used in such a way as to permit the distribution of leaves, dust, or other debris beyond the vertically extended lines of the lot as defined in section 1(b) on which the leaf blower is being used.

3. ~~4.~~ Leaf blowers shall at all times be operated at the lowest possible practical speed necessary to accomplish the task for which they are being used.

4. ~~5.~~ As of June 15, 2014, or one year after the effective date of this Bylaw, whichever is later, no commercial landscaper, commercial landscape company, or other entity engaged in the business of providing yard clean-up and maintenance services for a fee shall use any leaf blower within the Town in the exercise of that business unless the manufacturer specifies that the sound emitted from said leaf blower is no greater than 74 dB(A) at fifty (50) feet at full throttle."

5. ~~6.~~ Residential usage should refer to the Bylaws, Title V - Regulations Upon The Use Of Private Property, Article 12: Noise Abatement, Section 3. Daytime-Only Activities."

8) Linda Gutman/39 Columbia Rd./supports current ban:

- against using blowers for driveway cleaning-it's the wrong tool for this cleaning
- in favor of seasonal restrictions

9) Cheryl Miller/10 Thesda St./ supports current ban:

- named multiple publications on effects of blowers on children and pets
- blower instruction/direction manuals state people & pets should be 50' away while blowing
- people talk about property rights to use blowers what about her property rights to be outside or not have things blown onto property?
- people around blowers (workers included) should wear eye, ear, and respiratory protection-blowers should not be used within 50' of public ways

10) Mark Kaepplein/11 Palmer St./supports no ban:

- states the Selectmen ignored the no ban choice for a compromise
- people create more carbon monoxide than leaf blowers contribute
- cited a tragic leaf blower accident due to using an electric blower instead of gas powered
- no proof of real dangers-that's why it should not be a compromise but a no ban decision
- a ban places too much burden on the elderly

11) Andrew Fischer/25 Lombard Rd./supports a compromise:

- thanks Town Meeting and Leaf Blower Committee
- in a perfect world he'd support a seasonal ban but supports a compromise
- does think blowers are over used and that the noise & dust are a nuisance
- believes neighbors should work out differences
- Suggests usage of the "Cambridge" blower which is quieter and cleaner

12) Jeremy Marin/97A Claremont Ave./supports current ban:

- questioned why this is still being discussed because Town meeting voted a ban, the Special Election failed, and Special Town Meeting failed
- bad for the brains and the nervous systems of children
- there was a handout: American Academy of Pediatrics

13) Michael Ratner/1090 Mass. Ave./supports current ban:

- finds the noise from blowers more annoying than motorcycles
- wants the ban, but if technology improves than it can be revisited

14) Irwin Grossman/16 Peabody Rd./supports current ban:

- noise that bothers him is the noise of the derisiveness between the residents
- people need to respectfully discuss opposing views
- would like to see hard numbers from landscapers of the financial hurt they claim
- believes blowers are over used-not the right tool to clean parking lots & driveways

15) Robert Valeri/7 Wheaton Rd./supports compromise or no ban:

- small business already over burdened so why hurt them more
- member of the Chamber of Commerce and knows there is not much large business in Town so we need as many small businesses as possible in Town
- how can law enforcement be burdened with enforcement?

16) John Hogan/23 Melrose St./ supports a compromise:

- in favor of a compromise-use both a rake and blower

17) Chris Loretto/56 Adams St./supports a compromise:

- stated he put forward the amendment to Town Meeting

- suggests the committee should look at the inequity of resident vs. commercial landscaper hours-it promotes landscaper usage
- wants specific language on where to blow leaves & debris and that streets/sidewalks should be prohibited
- questioned what #6 means of the draft amendment by the committee
- suggests the recommendation use specific language and if can't all agree then go with a majority vote

18) Fran Lewis/111 Valentine Rd./ supports compromise or no ban:

- concern with who can monitor a ban
- noise is part of living in a community-Arlington is a small Town with many residents
- she's a senior citizen and needs to be able to use a blower to care for her property
- was a teacher for 48 years and is more concerned for children being exposed to many other dangers (mental & physical) than leaf blowers

19) Andy O'Brien/109 Hillside Ave./supports current ban:

- he voted for the leaf blower ban
- landscape equipment produces 20% of emissions nationwide
- would change my vote if blowers went to a 4 stroke emissions, newer technology, and training professional landscapers on how to blow in a particular way

20) John Deyst/28 Upland Rd. West/supports?:

- would like hard data to vote with instead of opinions and suggests there be some for the Special Town meeting discussion of blowers

21) Stephanie Levinson/38 Tower Rd./supports no ban:

- leaf blowers should be allowed anytime
- would compromise for the noise
- concerned about small businesses
- live on a dead end with open land beside her property and leaves and debris are always coming onto her property-needs to use a gas powered blower to keep her property clean

22) John Steven Cronin/29 Wyman Terr./supports no ban:

- thanked the Selectmen for the hearing/dialogue
- concerned about the amount of time spent on this issue and who'll be able to enforce-there are already many bylaws that aren't enforceable
- believes as the blower technology improves things will get better anyways
- everyone should respect their neighbor

23) Joe Cabral/8 Alpine St./supports no ban:

- he's elderly and on a fixed income and needs for blowers to be used by himself and landscapers

24) Barbara Costa/26 Woodland St./supports current ban:

- believes it comes down to respect for each other
- health effects can't be good for people
- wants to know what the hardships are due to the current leaf blower bylaw

III. There was discussion among the committee as to whether or not committee members should answer questions or make comments. It was decided that the committee would not speak but take these comments along with the comments sent in and review them at the next committee meeting on February 4, 2013. After they go over comments a recommendation will go to the Board of Selectmen where a warrant article will be submitted by the Board for a compromise on leaf blower usage. Mr. Greeley encouraged

the audience to consider running for Town Meeting so that they can be part of the final decision. Special Town Meeting will hear and vote this issue in the spring.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

A true record: Attest

Mary Ann Sullivan
Selectmen's Office

1/14/13

Agenda Item	Documents Used
1	Chronology
2.	Proposed Bylaw Amendment/Leaf Blower
3.	Agenda for 1/14/2013 Public Meeting

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS (1.14.13) & EMAILS:

ID	Commenter	Comment	Adjudication
		No Ban/Restrictions	
1	Stephen Harrington	any ban is not a good solution	supports no ban
		no public health hazard proof	
2	Mark Kaepplein	Selectmen ignored the no ban choice	supports no ban
		no proof of real dangers	
		ban places too much burden on the elderly	
3	Stephanie Levinson	leaf blowers should be allowed anytime	supports no ban
		concerned about small businesses	
		needs to use a gas powered blower to keep her property clean	
4	John Steven Cronin	the blower technology improves things will get better anyway	supports no ban
		concerned about the amount of time spent on this issue	
		who'll be able to enforce	
5	Joe Cabral	needs for blowers to be used by himself and landscapers	supports no ban
6	Maureen/Gary Foster	support majority vote of Spec Election	supports no ban
7	Gail Treanor	no more hazardous than a mower, snow blower, motorcycle	supports no ban
8	Stephen Andrew	we don't ban other power equipment	supports no ban
		affects price of elderly using landscapers	
9	Walter Abbott	burdens homeowners physically & financially	supports no ban
10	Dan Tocci	need to use to maintain property/many tools are power	supports no ban
11	Lori Talanian	want to use like we use lawn mowers	supports no ban
12	Rob Hegarty	blowers are no more hazardous than mowers	supports no ban
13	Maryanne Andrew	industry is addressing noise issues already	supports no ban
		majority voters showed they want to use blowers	
		if need compromise than only on hours during a day	
14	Mary Crusco	maintenance is a quick and efficient job with blowers	supports no ban

15	Anne Doherty	creates economic hardship on owners and businesses	supports no ban
16	Maria Romano	the majority of voices heard are for no ban	supports no ban
		no clear stats on damages from blowers	
17	Stephen Jennings	additional expense burden on homeowners	supports no ban
18	Christine Kerble	against the ban-committee has come up with good ideas	supports no ban/compromise
		committee should accept the good compromise ideas	
19	Theresa Granchelli	ban is financial burden on elderly-raking or paying	supports no ban/compromise
		compromise to deal with time of day for owners & businesses	
20	Christine Hall	drastic action creates unnecessary hardship	supports no ban/compromise
		if warranted-address concerns with common sense approach	
21	Stuart Cleinman	repeal ban-TMM did not listen to constituents as we should	supports no ban
22	Jonathan Cole	July 2012 vote-majority want no restrictions	supports no ban
23	Kathy Alesse	the ban is a drastic reaction to a peripheral town issue	supports no ban
		unnecessary financial strain on residents & business	
24	Richard Carr	heard quiet blowers-newer models have mufflers	supports no ban
25	Brian Doyle	Town shouldn't ban lawful activity on my property	supports no ban
		cost born by ban will increase prices hurting business & me	
26	Karen Karpinski	costs for maintenance of personal & public property will rise	supports no ban
27	Elaine Alexis	physical & financial hardship on owners	supports no ban
28	Julie Kalustian	it's a financial penalty and amounts to unfair "taxation"	supports no ban
		bad precedence to set-violation of freedom by aggravated resident	
		hope Town will act as a democracy instead as small minority interest	
29	Richard Penkala	impact struggling homeowners-especially elders	supports no ban
30	John Driscoll	ban is hardship-an increase of labor & monies	supports no ban
31	Peter Cassino	ban is hardship-takes more time & energy to maintain	supports no ban
32	Jean Flanagan	repeal ban-create drastic effect on business	supports no ban
33	Ellen Thames	need blowers to keep condo fees at affordable cost	supports no ban
34	Bruce Lefker	this regulation is not best way to achieve objectives	supports no ban

		for noise concerns-enforce noise restrictions and usage times	
35	Nancy Savioli	adversely affects small business owners	supports no ban
36	Brian Quinn	ban will cause an erosion of beauty in Arlington	supports no ban
		Town has enjoyed rising values-no reason to thwart that rise	
37	Jeff Calder	oppose recent ban of leaf blowers	supports no ban
		majority of voters clearly have spoken	
38	Patricia Jao	blowers are a reasonable use of personal property on private land	supports no ban
		if compromise is absolutely necessary-only limited hours	
39	Mary May	highly unreasonable-hurts small business & homeowners	supports no ban
40	Ann Bowler	contractors do a beautiful job in this Town-vote to use	supports no ban
41	Lee Cornetta	repeal ban-spare us another expense, show compassion	supports no ban
42	Linda Low	believes the leaf blower law needs to be banned	supports no ban
43	Mark Williams	creates economic hardships for all	supports no ban
44	Gretchen McDowall	higher cost to maintain property	supports no ban
45	Michelle Youell	creates serious hardships for many-will hurt people	supports no ban
		cause financial hardship for Kentwood condo fees-2012 saw increase of 20% fee /9% tax fee	
46	M.Disessa	hardship for many residents-particularly seniors on fixed incomes	supports no ban
		people won't want to take care of properties	
		Complete Ban/Restrictions	
1	Ilene Rosin	would like bigger restrictions because of sound and pollution	supports ban
		be more careful with definitions	
2	Cheryl Miller	landscapers & homeowners should have same regulations	supports ban
		specify what time means in ... "30 minutes at a time"	
		how will it be enforced	
		use as manuals specify... so not within 50' of a property line	
3	Jane Culbert	blowers waste precious fuels & pollute the air	supports ban
		use only in the fall-might be useful	

4	Martin Long	noise is terrible & distracting	supports ban
		landscapers should raise their rates	
5	Andrea Davis	wants full year round ban	supports ban
		Supports Current Bylaw	
1	Steven Delbanco	“smell” test blower or rake and the rake is healthier	supports current bylaw
2	Henry Olds	have to suffer inconveniences to help change the world	supports current bylaw
		maybe pay kids to do the raking	
3	George Buckley	full throttle usage is a clear and present hazard	supports current bylaw
		stirs up an assault on the respiratory system	
		suggests a low throttle speed	
4	Linda Gutman	against using blowers for driveway cleaning	supports current bylaw
		in favor of seasonal restrictions	
5	Cheryl Miller	unhealthy effects of blowers on children and pets	supports current bylaw
		talk about rights but what about her property rights	
6	Jeremy Marin	why still being discussed - Town meeting voted a ban	supports current bylaw
		Special Election failed, and Special Town Meeting failed	
		bad for the brains and the nervous systems of children	
7	Michael Ratner	the noise from blowers more annoying than motorcycles	supports current bylaw
8	Irwin Grossman	people need to respectfully discuss opposing views	supports current bylaw
		believes blowers are over used	
		like to see hard numbers from landscapers of the financial hurt	
9	Andy O'Brien	landscape equipment produces 20% of emissions nationwide	supports current bylaw
		train landscapers on how to blow in a particular way	
10	John Deyst	would like hard data to vote not just opinions	supports current bylaw
11	Barbara Costa	health effects can't be good for people	supports current bylaw
		what the hardships are due to the current leaf blower bylaw?	
12	Beate Becker	strong support to uphold bylaw	supports current bylaw

13	Kathy Coleman	bylaw is a reasonable restriction to accommodate all	supports current bylaw
14	Bonnie Payne	supports seasonal ban and TM vote	supports current bylaw
15	Paula Raia	honor bylaw voted in at Spec. Elec. Defined by state law	supports current bylaw
		need conservation natural resources, noise pollution & dispersal of pollutants	
16	Amy/Simon Horsburgh	it reduces pollutants - noise & particle	supports current bylaw
17	Maryanna Foscett	want cleaner air, quieter neighborhoods & healthier landscapes	supports current bylaw
18	Larry Krupp	keep leaf blower ban in place	supports current bylaw
19	Steve Reynolds	noise & pollution is outrageous	supports current bylaw
20	James Crouch	loathe leaf blowers-but if partial ban remains it's ok	supports current bylaw
21	Doug Mayo-Wells	bold and forward thinking	supports current bylaw
		urge adopting the most restrictive of the compromise proposals	
22	Beth Soltzberg	they are significant source of avoidable fossil fuel use	supports current bylaw
23	Chris Fitch	people are frightened by change-this change is good	supports current bylaw
24	Diane Gordon	supports seasonal restriction-TM vote & July vote	supports current bylaw
25	Elizabeth Heichler	in favor of bylaw restrictions-unacceptable pollution/noise	supports current bylaw
26	Joanne Reeves	yes to peace and quiet & restrictions on gas blowers	supports current bylaw
27	Harris Band	maintain leaf blower ban	supports current bylaw
		Supports A Compromise to Bylaw	
1	Gordon Jamieson	refer to reference submitted (attached)	supports a compromise
2	Eric Burger	compromise makes good sense	supports a compromise
		hardship on owners re: condo fees and tight budgets	
3	Andrew Fischer	blowers are over used and the noise & dust are a nuisance	supports a compromise
		believes neighbors should work out differences	
		Suggests usage of the "Cambridge" blower	
4	Robert Valeri	small business already over burdened	supports compromise/no ban
		need as many small businesses as possible in Town	
		how can law enforcement be burdened with enforcement	

5	John Hogan	in favor of a compromise-use both a rake and blower	supports a compromise
6	Chris Loretta	look at inequity of resident vs. commercial landscaper hours	supports a compromise
		wants specific language on where to blow leaves & debris	
		questioned what #6 means of the draft amendment	
		use specific language and at least go with a majority vote	
7	Fran Lewis	concern with who can monitor a ban	supports compromise/no ban
		small Town with many residents-noise is a part of life	
		she needs to use a blower to care for her property	
8	Gary Shostak	operate newer blowers with limits on # used simultaneously	supports compromise
9	Clifton Fonstad	favor restricting:9-3 weekdays only	supports compromise
		use only in Spring (April& May), Fall (October & September)	
		need regulations around pedestrians & cyclists	
		need regulations on protective gear of operators/workers	
10	Kathleen Moriarty	restrict to certain hours if noise is the issue	supports compromise
		electric blowers aren't as strong and run longer	
11	Peter Boyajian	use common sense and let people use blowers	supports compromise/no ban
12	Gordon Jamieson	multi amendment changes--see hand out attached	supports compromise
13	John Maguire	gas powered blowers allows quicker work-saves time	supports compromise
		reasonable compromise is time period of 9 a.m.-4 p.m.	
14	Charlie Balyozian	find common ground on regulation of this issue	supports compromise
		perhaps limited use or restriction	
		OTHER	
1	Peter S.	Mass. DEP defines noise pollution 10 decibels above ambient	?